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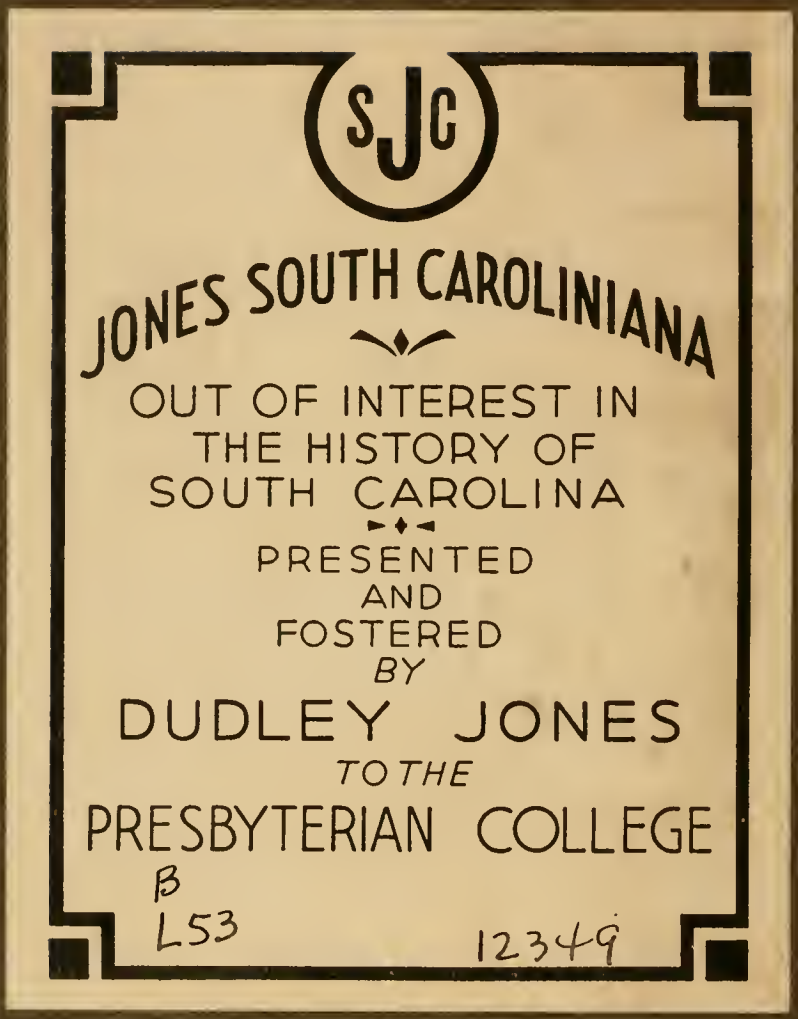
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JONES SOUTH CAROLINIANA
OUT OF INTEREST IN
THE HISTORY OF
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PRESENTED
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Mrs. Sue Baker,

MEMORIAL

OF

GEORGE GIBBS LELAND.

CHARLESTON, S. C.
WALKER, EVANS & COGSWELL CO., PRINTERS,
3 and 5 Broad and 117 East Bay Streets.
1891.

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George Gibbs Leland.

Mt. Pleasant, S. C., April 9th, 1891.

We have received very many precious letters of condolence and sympathy from friends in and out of the State, on the announcement of the death of our son, on the 29th of March last, and find it too trying, if not impossible, to respond to each separately, by writing out some of the testimony he left as a legacy to us, to them and to the world. I have, therefore, prepared for printing, the following sketch of some of the reminiscences of his early years, with a faint attempt at description, of some of the scenes on his death-bed. Thanking our kind friends for their words of condolence and sweet sympathy, so warm from their hearts, I remain, as my life-long friend, Dr. Palmer, of New Orleans, subscribed him himself, in a letter just received from him.

"Yours, in the Communion of sorrow,"

J. A. LELAND.

George G. Leland was born at Davidson College, N. C., Nov. 26th, 1859, at the time I was serving as one of the Professors in that institution In the beginning of the war, we had returned to South Carolina, and my family took refuge in Greenwood, S. C. In 1863, when his father, on furlough, was accompanying his family home, after a visit to the low country, the train ran off the track on the S. C. R. R., and the car in which we were, was thrown on its side. In the dust and outer darkness, I found all the family by their voices, excepting George. When the accident occurred he was sleeping on the seat beside me, with his head in my

lap. Groping my way to this seat, I found his legs in the opening formed by the shattered sash, but his body was under the ledge of the car top. Calling for a light and help, one of the hands began digging under him with a spade, as he would not be pulled out. After some spadefuls of earth were removed, I pulled at his feet, and a voice that sounded far away, but sweeter than any sound that had ever greeted my ear, called out the one word "Pa." We soon had him out, with his whole face covered with a paste of clay and blood. Taking him to the bank, this was soon washed off, and the only damage was his nose cut open, from the corner of the eye to the extremity of the nostril. This was promptly sewed up in Columbia, but he carried the scar to his grave. Wondering how his body had escaped being crushed by the car-ledge, I rode to the scene of the accdent, the next morning, some five miles, and found the car righted. Just where his little body had lain, shown by the spade marks, there was a drain a little wider than between his shoulders, and the deep lines cut by the ledge were plain on both sides this drain. I felt then, and have felt ever since, that the life of the little boy thus almost miraculously delivered, was saved for some wise purpose. And has it not been?

In 1865, when the first garrison of negro troops was passing through Greenwood, on their way to Abbeville C. H., they halted at our gate, and two of them, with new uniforms and bright buttons, came in for a bucket of water. Seeing my daughter, then twelve years old, near the door, one of them said, "Missie, ain't you glad to see so many fine bucks come to take care of you?" I was not at home, but George, just six years old, felt his responsibility, and rushing up to him, with his fist doubled, he exclaimed, "You black rascal! if you don't get out of this yard, I will set the dogs on you!" They only laughed at the "young rebel," got their water and went away. I mention this incident only to show his nerve, even at that tender age, which only grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength ever afterwards. In fact, in physical development, muscular

power and high health, he was distinguished among his cotemporaries from his boyhood to the sudden hemorrhage which brought on his last illness.

But I must hasten on. His preparatory education was mostly at home during the dark days of Reconstruction. He then attended the Military Academy at Charlotte, N. C., over which Col. Thomas presided. Col. Thomas had graduated at the Citadel during my term of service there, as Professor, and he very generously gave him a beneficiary course for the year he was with him. As he had been offered a scholarship at Union College, Schenectady, he decided to go there in 1877, and was graduated with distinction in the class of '81. During his Senior year, he received the first grade in a class of sixty odd, in the department of Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy. He was a member of the Young Men's C. A. in Schenectady, and often took a leading part in their out-door meetings and addresses. He wrote to his mother that he thought seriously of preparing himself to preach the Gospel, but when he became so much absorbed in his work at the High School, he seemed to have abandoned the idea. Tho' on his death-bed, he said, that it had ever been on his heart, and if his life had been spared, he certainly would have made the effort.

During his stay at College, we had returned to our native village of Mt. Pleasant, after some thirty years' absence to make it our permanent home. He came back to us here, and as salt water was new to him, he soon became infatuated with its recreations and products.

Feeling that he must do something for himself, he first applied for and took charge of one of the public schools in St. Thomas' Parish, and was afterwards elected as Assistant Teacher in the High School of Charleston. He held this position for eight years, in fact, until his first attack of hemorrhage rendered it necessary for him to resign.

How he discharged his duties there, has already been testified to, by the authorities and pupils in most gratifying terms. A few weeks before his death, Mr. Dibble, the Principal of the High School, in a casual conversation with me

in Charleston, said: "I have known many young men, but I have never known one for whom I entertain as high an admiration, respect and love as I do for George Leland. He is a true South Carolinian, high-toned, brave and courteous, always zealous and faithful in the discharge of his duties—in short he is a pure and incorruptible Christian gentleman." This was high praise, coming from such a source, and I will always remember the exact words and earnest manner in which it was uttered.

In 1887, he married Miss Annie, only daughter of Mr. Alex. McElroy, of this Parish, with whom he lived most happily in his own home, with his father and mother, until she fell a victim to the same disease which has now hurried him to the grave. He tried, for her, a change of air in Summerville, some months before her death, but in spite of his devoted attention and nursing, she left him a sorrowing widower, in the short space of one-and-a-half years. Their infant babe now sleeps on her breast, where his remains have also been carried to lie by their side.

For ten consecutive years, since leaving college, he knew no other home but that of his parents, and this is the average length of mature life. We considered him as no small part of our home, given us for our support and comfort, and we leaned upon him with loving confidence.

He, too, loved his home with more than filial affection, and any temporary separation was most painful to him, When engaged with his work in the city, he often told us how it cheered him to look forward to the long winter's evenings around the cheerful family hearth. Salt water, with its novel attractions, after his return from College, was an inexhaustible source of pleasure to him, and he gave up to these most of his long summer's vacations with all the zest and energy which characterized his literary toils. He kept our table abundantly supplied with every variety of salt-water products, in their season. He said, on his death-bed, that God had been very good to him in giving him the health to enjoy these recreations for so many seasons, and

in guarding his life from fatal casualties, for so many years, through them all.

A few years ago he joined the Etiwan Lodge of Free Masons, in this place, and, as characteristic with him, he became an earnest and zealous member. In a very short time he became Master of the Lodge, and, by research and hard study, his lectures were said to have become very entertaining and instructive. His brother Mason's were very kind and attentive to him in health and sickness, and it was their hands which prepared his remains for their last resting place.

He had not thought of bringing his letter of dismission from the Presbyterian Church in Schenectady, but in 1885, when his brother, W. A. Leland, then a cadet at the Citadel desired to come before our session and join the church of his fathers, George said he would go forward with him, as he preferred to unite himself to this church, "on a profession of faith." The feelings of their parents cannot be described when they witnessed the scene in the church, when their two sons—all that were left them—stood up boldly together, and together took, each for himself, those solemn vows of consecration, in the presence of men and angels. Their only surviving sister was also present, and we enjoyed the unspeakable happiness and gratitude of sitting around the table of our Lord, at the Communion service which followed, with *all* our immediate family who were left to us.

But again, I must hasten on. When his disease had taken firm hold on his system, about the beginning of last year, he tried an entire change of air and scene, by visiting his brother, in Georgia, who was then, and still is, a civil engineer, in the service of the Georgia Central Road. For some weeks he wrote the change had benefited him, but some exposure brought on violent hemorrhage, and as soon as he was strong enough, he returned to be nursed by his mother, after whom his heart yearned, and whose tender care, he thought, excelled all other remedies.

As soon as he felt strong enough, he joined his father-in-

law, Mr. McElroy, on his farm, to try the effect of out-door work, and, as was his wont, he worked faithfully and to the best of his ability. But his weight continued to grow less and less, and his strength beginning to fail him, he came home, as he said, to die.

We thought a change to Aiken would benefit him, as his associations with Summerville were too sad and mournful, and to encourage him, his mother promised to accompany him as far as our daughter's, Mrs. Sanders, in Barnwell County. This she did, and remained there with him for some ten days She then returned home, as he seemed brighter, and said he would go alone, as soon as he felt stronger. But a sudden and most unfavorable change in the weather completely prevented him, and he wrote to his brother, then in Alabama, to come on at once and take him home. This Allie did willingly and promptly, and they had their last parting scene at home, though neither knew it at the time. The love between these brothers was "wonderful, passing the love of women."

George then took to his bed, which he never left, even for a day, for the last three weeks of his life. Even then his symptoms varied greatly. Some days he would be greatly relieved, but more frequently he would be worn down with continuous paroxysms of coughing for hours together. The fever also became almost continuous towards the last, his pulse ranging from 125 to 150, and his temperature from 100° to 107°. Yet, through it all, his patience, resignation and pleasant talk, when he was permitted to talk, made his chamber the brightest room in the house. His mother made it her chamber, too, for all the three weeks, day and night, generally lying by his side all night. She would tell me in the morning, of the sweet talks they would have during the silent hours of the night, and that, in her long experience, she had never known one who was ripening so fast for heaven. I, too, had many talks with him, and witnessed scenes around that couch that brought heaven very near to earth. He realized perfectly, that he was on his deathbed, and was very fond of praying aloud when his mother

was with him, she said, the most earnest, eloquent prayers she ever heard from mortal lips. She regrets that she did not write them down at the time, but now, with a memory impaired by age and suffering, she can only recall fragments of some of them.

Among the earlier of them was his prayer for some assurance of his acceptance, one expression was, "Oh Lord, I am not worthy to wipe my sin-stained feet on the door-mat of the portals of Heaven, but Thou, Oh Saviour, who canst save to the uttermost those who call upon Thee, and whose blood can make the foulest clean, let me feel my feeble grasp in Thy Almighty hand, and take me in ! Blessed Saviour, take me in !" This was uttered in impassioned tones, and with outstretched arms. For some hours afterwards he was calm, oh, *so* calm, looking upon all around him with such loving eyes.

The next day, when I was sitting by him, he said, "after feeling so happy since yesterday, I fear I am beginning to despond." I told him it was only a temptation of Satan, who, he remembered, attempted to tempt our Saviour himself, on the night of his betrayal, and that He had conquered this enemy, and could and would deliver him. He then turned his head and this prayer came welling from his heart- "Oh, Blessed Saviour, my boat is about to founder, my anchor can't take hold, the winds and the waves are high, the tide runs strong, and *my* strength is all gone ! Jesus, master, give me a strong grip of thine almighty hand and pull me through to the calm waters !" And that prayer was instantly answered, as was shown by his bright eyes and placid face. As his mother, lying by his side, was smoothing his hair back from his forehead, I thought of that sweet assurance, "comforted, as one whom his *mother* comforteth." Upon his mother asking him, "my darling, can you *see* Jesus ?" he replied, "No, ma, I can't see Him, but I feel Him all about me. I don't mean to be irreverent, but I just shake hands with Jesus, as I shake hands with you," and he gave her such a warm grip, and such a strong shake, as surprised her, from its vitality. Not very long after this I heard his voice,

almost as clear and strong as when in health, as I was sitting in the next room with the door open, "Now, ma, let us pray together for my peaceful end." Then passing his arm around her neck, he drew her head down to his left breast, and begun by pleading the promise of his Saviour to his followers when here on earth, "my peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. I already know something of that peace that passeth all understanding, that this poor world can neither give nor take away. But I now pray for a physically, peaceful end, not for myself, but for Thy aged servant who will be at my side."

This was the night before his death, and he died at seven the next morning. Then calling to me, he said, "Pa, sit down here near me, and listen," I found what he meant in the faint, rattling sounds in his chest, caused by accumulation of phlegm which he could not void. "It sounds badly, don't it? But I want to assure you that I don't suffer *one bit.* I have prayed for peace, and my prayer is answered. If, when the end approaches, I begin to throw my arms and limbs about, it will only be the worn out machinery falling to pieces. I will suffer *no more forever.*" Shortly after this he said to his mother, "Ma, I can't pray now, what is the cause?" she replied, "my darling, the time for prayer is past with you, all your prayers are answered, it soon will be time for praise."

He seized the thought and in tones loud enough to reach me in the next room, he exclaimed: "Prayer and Praise!" three times repeated, followed by "Bless the Lord, oh, my soul," *four* times repeated. It sounded to me as coming from the midst of the River. Afterwards, turning to his mother, still by his side, he said: "Ma, it is so sweet to lie here without any suffering, but I *have* suffered terribly on this bed." His mother then reminded him of what Paul said of filling up in his own body, what is behind of the afflictions of Christ, he exclaimed, "Oh, what a comforting thought! How it would have soothed at the time, to think that I was partaking of his infinite sufferings at the last."

He spoke but little after this, but laid quietly and peacefully on his back, while his life slowly ebbed away. The dark night had given way to the bright light of that Easter Sabbath, March 29th, when his mother, still by his side, I leaned over him and watched his breath coming so slowly and so short, the sun was up and shining brightly when he ceased to breathe. Though watching for it, I could not tell *when* his breathing ceased. It was an infant going to sleep on the bosom of its mother. His prayer was sweetly, so sweetly answered.

Oh, my friends! there *is* an Almighty Saviour, full of mercy and of love. There *is* a Heaven of blessedness, of peace and of rest. There *is*, too, the "Grace of God," else how could we, the stricken parents of such a boy, sitting in our lonely home, exclaim, as we do now, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD."

The day before his death, I told him I was about to telegraph for his brother, and he said, "let me give the message, then," and he dictated as follows:

"DEAR ALLIE.—I am sinking fast, and can hardly live out the day."

Allie's reply came promptly:

"Don't leave me, George, I will start on to-morrow's train."

It was a co-incidence, that he started at 7 A. M., the very hour that George breathed his last. I, also, the next day, telegraphed to our friend, who had been with us so often in our times of sorrow, the Rev. Dr. Girardeau, to know if he could conduct the funeral services on the following Tuesday. His reply came promptly: "Yes, I will be, Providence permitting, at the 10 o'clock boat on Tuesday." He had fixed on that day to give Allie ample time to be present.

The church was full—all the village seemed to be present, and Dr. Girardeau's heart was full. It would be vain

to attempt to repeat anything he said, but there were very few dry eyes in that audience. The remains were taken from the church to the ferry-boat and friends were awaiting to accompany us to his final resting place, in the grave yard of the Second Presbyterian Church.

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